

19 Flint Street, Salem

According to available evidence, this house was built in 1871 for Leonard Harrington, leather dealer.

On 18 March 1871 Leonard B. Harrington Jr. for \$3000 purchased from Samuel P. Andrews a parcel of land, 8058 square feet, fronting easterly 60' on Flint Street (ED 818:145). At about the same time, Mr. Harrington exchanged small gores of land, which helped to square off the house-lot (ED 819:89). Mr. Harrington, thirty, then proceeded to build the present house on the lot, probably in the spring of 1871. (Salem valuations for 1871 have the penciled notation that Leonard Harrington had a new house at 7 Flint Street, house worth \$7000, lot worth \$2000).

Leonard B. Harrington Jr. was born in Salem on 8 September 1841, the son of Leonard B. Harrington, a currier, and his wife Margaret C. Hersey. Leonard was the last of their four children. An infant, also named Leonard, had died in 1834, while Henry and Mary Elizabeth had survived.

Leonard grew up in a house on upper Federal Street. His father, born in 1803, was a native of Salem, the son of Charles Harrington, who had come to Salem from Watertown after the end of the war for independence. L.B. Harrington Sr. went to sea at thirteen, but soon gave up that life and was apprenticed to a currier in Roxbury. In 1824 he began as a journeyman currier, curing leather to be used to make various items such as shoes, saddles, etc. In 1829 he went into business for himself; and in January, 1831 he married Margaret Hersey of Roxbury. In the 1830s he formed a partnership with Henry Turner as Harrington & Turner, curriers, with their leather operation situated at 35 Boston Street, Salem. At first the Harringtons resided on upper Essex Street, but by 1841, when Leonard Jr. was born, they had a house on Federal Street (evidently #153, where they certainly resided in the 1850s).

In the decade before Leonard's birth, Salem's maritime commerce had waned. The merchants had taken their equity out of wharves and warehouses and ships and put it into manufacturing and transportation, as the advent of railroads and canals in the 1830s diverted both capital and trade away from the coast. Some merchants did not make the transition, and were ruined. Old-line areas of work, like rope-making, sail-making, and ship chandleries, gradually declined and disappeared. Well into the 1830s, Salem slumped badly.

Despite its woes, Salem was chartered as a city in 1836. City Hall was built in 1837-8 on Washington Street and the city seal was adopted with an already-anachronistic Latin motto of “to the farthest port of the rich East”—a far cry from “Go West, young man!” The Panic of 1837, a brief, sharp, nationwide economic depression, caused even more Salem families to head west in search of fortune and a better future. Salem had not prepared for the industrial economy, and had few natural advantages. The North River served not to power factories but mainly to carry the waste from the many tanneries (23 by 1832), like L.B. Harrington’s, that had set up along its banks. Throughout the 1830s, the leaders of Salem scrambled to re-invent an economy for their fellow citizens, many of whom were mariners without much sea-faring to do. Ingenuity, ambition, and hard work would have to carry the day.

One inspiration was the Salem Laboratory, which was Salem’s first science-based manufacturing enterprise. At the plant built in 1817 on the North River, the production of alum and blue vitriol was a specialty; and it proved a very successful business. Salem’s whale-fishery, active for many years in the early 1800s, led, in the 1830s, to the manufacturing of high-quality candles at Stage Point, along with machine oils. The candles proved very popular. Some of the whale-blubber was perhaps processed on Boston Street, at “Blubber Hollow.” Lead-manufacturing began in the 1820s, and grew large after 1830, when Wyman’s gristmills on the Forest River were retooled for making high-quality white lead and sheet lead (the approach to Marblehead is still called Lead Mills Hill, although the empty mill buildings burned down in 1960s).

These enterprises were a start toward taking Salem in a new direction. In 1838 the Eastern Rail Road began operating between Boston and Salem, which gave the people of Salem and environs a direct route to the region’s largest market. The tanning and curing of leather was a very important industry by the mid-1800s. It was conducted on and near Boston Street, along the upper North River. There were 41 tanneries in 1844, and 85 in 1850, employing 550 hands. The leather business would continue to grow in importance throughout the 1800s.

In 1846 the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Company completed the construction at Stage Point of the largest factory building in the United States, 60’ wide by 400’ long. It was an immediate success, and hundreds of people found employment there, many of them living in industrial tenements built nearby. Also in the 1840s, a new method was introduced to make possible high-volume industrial shoe production. In Lynn, the factory system was perfected, and that city became the

nation's leading shoe producer. Salem had shoe factories too, and attracted shoe workers from outlying towns and country areas. Even the population changed, as hundreds of Irish families, fleeing the Famine, settled in Salem; and the men went to work in the factories and as laborers. At that time the Catholics worshipped at St. Mary's Church, which stood nearby at the corner of Bridge and Mall Streets.

In the face of all this change, some members of Salem's waning merchant class continued to pursue their sea-borne businesses; but even the conditions of shipping changed, and Salem was left on the ebb tide. In the late 1840s, giant clipper ships replaced the smaller vessels that Salem men had sailed around the world; and the clippers, with their deep drafts and large holds, were usually too large for Salem and its harbor. The town's shipping soon consisted of little more than Zanzibar-trade vessels and visits from Down East coasters with cargoes of fuel wood and building timber. By 1850 Salem was about finished as a working port. A picture of Salem's sleepy waterfront is given by Hawthorne in his "introductory section" (really a sketch of Salem) to **The Scarlet Letter**, which he began while working in the Custom House.

The symbol of Salem's new industrial economy was the large twin-towered granite train station, built in 1848-9 on filled-in land at the foot of Washington Street, where before had been the merchants' wharves. The 1850s brought continued growth: new churches, schools, streets, stores, etc. More Catholic churches were built, and new housing was constructed in North Salem and the Gallows Hill areas to accommodate the workers. A spur railroad line came in from Peabody (South Danvers), past the end of Northey Street, and turned down Saunders Street, where it crossed Bridge Street and ran on to Phillips Wharf, where the trains freighted coal and carried it all the way to the factories of Lowell.

In 1860, Leonard Harrington (Jr.), 19, was listed as residing at his father's house, 153 Federal Street, and working in Boston as a clerk at 91 Milk Street (1861 Salem Directory). At home lived his parents, his brother Henry, 27, a clerk, his sister Mary, 21, and a servant, Eliza Derrell, 25. Mr. L.B. Harrington then owned real estate worth \$10,000 and had \$100,000 in personal estate (1860 census, ward four, house 1942).

The Civil War began in April, 1861, and went on for four years, during which hundreds of Salem men served in the army and navy, and many were killed or died of disease or abusive treatment while imprisoned. In mid-September, 1862, Leonard Harrington, 21, enlisted for nine months in the U.S. Army, as a private in the 50th regiment of Mass. Volunteer Infantry, which had many Salem men. He

was assigned to Company A (the Salem Light Infantry), under Capt. George D. Putnam. After encamping in New York for some weeks, Company A embarked on Dec. 13 on the transport *Jersey Blue*, bound for the Gulf of Mexico; however, once at sea, the vessel proved unseaworthy and made an emergency landing in a storm at Hilton Head, SC. On another vessel they made their way to New Orleans, arriving Jan. 20, 1863 and proceeding upriver to Baton Rouge, where they camped and prepared for combat. After some skirmishing and many long marches, Leonard Harrington and the other men of Company A were engaged in May and June in the bloody attacks on Port Hudson, which finally surrendered after a siege. In August the men were sent home, and arrived by train in Salem on August 11th, “thus completing an exceedingly arduous term of service, which left its marks deeply upon all of the command.” (see George D. Putnam’s article in Hurd’s *History of Essex County*).

The war continued, and Leonard Harrington resumed his job in Boston and his place in his father’s house on Federal Street. The people of Salem contributed greatly to efforts to alleviate the suffering of the soldiers, sailors, and their families; and there was great celebration when the war finally ended in the spring of 1865.

Through the 1860s and 1870s, Salem continued to pursue a manufacturing course. The managers and capitalists tended to build their new, grand houses along Lafayette Street (these houses may still be seen, south of Holly Street). For the workers, they built more and more tenements near the mills of Stage Point. A second, larger, factory building for the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Company would be added in 1859, and a third in 1865; and by 1879 the mills would employ 1200 people and produce annually 14,700,000 yards of cloth. Shoe-manufacturing also continued to expand, and by 1879 Salem would have 40 shoe factories employing 600-plus operatives. More factories and more people required more space for buildings, more roads, and more storage areas. Salem kept building infrastructure; and new businesses arose, and established businesses expanded. Retail stores prospered, and machinists, carpenters, millwrights, and other specialists all thrived. In the 1870s, French-Canadian families began moving to Salem to work in the mills and factories, and more houses and tenements were built in what had been open areas of the city.

During this period of industrial expansion, Leonard’s father, Leonard B. Harrington Sr., was one of the leaders of the city’s profitable leather industry. Leonard Jr. continued to work in Boston (at 93 Pearl Street by 1871) and to board at his father’s at 153 Federal Street (see 1872 Salem Director).

In 1871 Mr. Harrington, who was engaged to marry Ellen P. Langmaid, had this house built in the then-popular French Empire style, four-square with mansard roof and some Italianate trim. They married on December 4th. That year, 1871, was uneventful in Salem, which, in 1870, had received its last cargo from Zanzibar, thus ending a once-important trade. President U.S. Grant passed through Salem in October, 1871; and a new Salem & New York freight steamboat line was in operation. In 1872, a fire destroyed a tannery on Franklin Street in North Salem, near the site of a similar fire in 1870. Leonard Harrington kept commuting to his job; and on Nov. 9th the financial and manufacturing district of the city of Boston was destroyed in a terrible fire. It is likely that Mr. Harrington's office was among the many consumed in that inferno, one of worst urban fires in American history.

Boston rebuilt, and Mr. Harrington carried on his business in downtown Boston. In 1873, the Harringtons had a child, a girl whom they named Mabel.

Salem continued to prosper in the 1870s, carried forward by the leather-making business. In 1874 the city was visited by a tornado and shaken by a minor earthquake. In the following year, the large Pennsylvania Pier (site of the present coal-fired harborside electrical generating plant) was completed to begin receiving large shipments of coal. Beyond it, at Juniper Point, a new owner began subdividing the old Allen farmlands into a new development called Salem Willows and Juniper Point. In the Centennial Year, 1876, Prof. A.G. Bell of Salem announced that he had discovered a way to transmit voices over telegraph wires; and in 1877, with the arrival of a vessel from Cayenne, Salem's foreign trade came to an end. On Boston Street in 1879, the Arnold tannery caught fire and burned down.

Through this period, the Harringtons appear to have lived in comfort in their nice house. In 1880 the family resided here (Leonard Harrington, 39, leather dealer, his wife Ellen, 34, their daughter Mabel C., six), along with two servants, Sophia Baudrot, originally of Nova Scotia, and Nellie Cohane, 17 (1880 census, ED 234 p. 42).

By 1881 this house was re-numbered 6 Flint Street. The Harringtons lived here; Mr. Harrington worked in Boston at 161 Summer Street, as a leather dealer in his partnership, Harrington & Cummings. Mr. Harrington's father, Mr. L. B. Harrington Sr., continued operating his very successful leather factory on Highland Avenue, Salem. In the fall of 1886 the leather workers went on strike, and there was a riot on Boston Street on Nov. 25, followed three days later by a settlement.

In 1887 the John Bertram house, nearby on Essex Street, was donated to the city for a public library; and there was a great parade of temperance clubs.

Leonard Harrington kept commuting to Boston through the very cold winter of 1887-1888. On January 26, 1888, occurred a total eclipse of the moon, which Mr. Harrington probably observed. He fell ill in February; and on the morning of 4 March 1888, a Sunday, he died here at home, aged 47 years. His obituary noted that he was a member of the firm of Harrington & Cummings, leather dealers, in Boston, and that he belonged to Post 34 of the Grand Army of the Republic. His death was "quite sudden." He left his widow Ellen and daughter, Mabel, as well as his father, who would die in 1889.

In the years that followed, Mrs. Ellen P. Harrington resided here. Her daughter Mabel married a Mr. Buckminster, and moved to Burlington, Mass.

After withstanding the pressures of the new industrial city for about 50 years, Salem's rivers began to disappear. The once-broad North River was filled from both shores, and became a canal along Bridge Street above the North Bridge. The cove adjoining Northey Street was filled in from Bridge Street all the way to the railroad tracks. The large and beautiful Mill Pond, which occupied the whole area between the present Jefferson Avenue, Canal Street, and Loring Avenue, finally vanished beneath streets, storage areas, junk-yards, rail-yards, and parking lots. The South River, too, with its epicenter at Central Street (that's why there was a Custom House built there in 1805), disappeared under the pavement of Riley Plaza and New Derby Street, and its old wharves (even the mighty Union Wharf, formerly Long Wharf, at the foot of Union Street) were joined together with much in-fill and turned into coal-yards and lumber-yards. Only a canal was left, running in from Derby and Central Wharves to Lafayette Street.

In the early 20th century large numbers of Polish and Ukrainian families came to Salem and settled primarily in the Derby Street neighborhood. By the eve of World War One, Salem was a bustling, polyglot city that supported large department stores and large factories of every description. Its politics were lively, and its economy was strong.

In 1911 Mrs. Harrington moved to Burlington, probably to live with her daughter; and the house was then occupied by Walter C. Harris, who worked in Boston as a private secretary at 50 State Street (see 1912 Directory). Mr. Harris, who had grown up on Bridge Street, had resided at 15 Winter Street in 1911. Mrs.

Harrington returned to Salem by August, 1913, when her daughter Mrs. Buckminster granted her a life estate in the homestead here (ED 2227:291).

On June 25, 1914, in the morning, in Blubber Hollow (Boston Street opposite Federal), a fire started in one of Salem's fire-prone wooden tanneries. This fire soon consumed the building and raced out of control, for the west wind was high and the season had been dry. The next building caught fire, and the next, and out of Blubber Hollow the fire roared easterly, a monstrous front of flame and smoke (passing by not far from the back yard of this house), wiping out the houses of lower Boston Street, upper Essex Street, Warren Street, and upper Broad Street, and then sweeping through Hathorne, Winthrop, Endicott, and other residential streets. Men and machines could not stop it: the enormous fire crossed over into South Salem and destroyed the neighborhoods west of Lafayette Street, then devoured the mansions of Lafayette Street itself, and raged onward into the tenement district. Despite the combined efforts of heroic fire crews from many towns and cities, the fire overwhelmed everything in its path: it smashed into the large factory buildings of the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Company (Congress Street), which exploded in an inferno; and it rolled down Lafayette Street and across the water to Derby Street. There, just beyond Union Street, after a 13-hour rampage, the monster died, having consumed 250 acres, 1600 houses, and 41 factories, and leaving three dead and thousands homeless. Some people had insurance, some did not; all received much support and generous donations from all over the country and the world. It was one of the greatest urban disasters in the history of the United States, and the people of Salem would take years to recover from it. Eventually, they did, and many of the former houses and businesses were rebuilt; and several urban-renewal projects (including Hawthorne Boulevard, which involved removing old houses and widening old streets) were put into effect.

Mrs. Ellen Harrington left town again, never to return. She was dead by March, 1918, when the homestead here was sold by her daughter Mrs. Mabel (Harrington) Henderson, of Burlington, to John H. Sullivan of Salem, who immediately conveyed the premises to his wife, Margaret P. Sullivan (ED 2387:470, 471). The Sullivans would reside here for many years. Mr. Sullivan was president of his own company (the J.H. Sullivan Co., formerly the P.J. Smith Co.), with a facility at 30 Foster Street for manufacturing cement counters for the shoe industry. He was born in 1875 in Massachusetts of parents born in Ireland. He married, by 1907, Margaret, who was a year older and of similar background. They had a son William T., born c.1906, and a daughter Mary born c.1917 (per 1920 census, ED 265, SD5).

By the 1920s, Salem was once again a thriving city; and its tercentenary in 1926 was a time of great celebration. From that time forward, Salem boomed right through to the 1960s. Eventually, the arrival of suburban shopping malls and the relocation of manufacturing businesses took their toll, as they have with many other cities. More than most, Salem has navigated its way forward into the present with success, trading on its share of notoriety arising from the witch trials, but also from its history as a great seaport and as the home of Bowditch, McIntire, Bentley, Story, and Hawthorne. Most of all, it remains a city where the homes of the old-time mariners, mill-operatives, and leather-dealers are all honored as a large part of what makes Salem different from any other place.

--Robert Booth for Historic Salem Inc., 20 Dec. 2002

Glossary & Sources

A figure like (ED 123:45) refers to book 123, page 45, Essex South registry of Deeds, Federal Street, Salem.

A figure like (#12345) refers to Essex Probate case 12345, on file at the Essex Probate Court, Federal Street, Salem, or on microfilm at Mass. Archives, Boston, or at the Peabody Essex Museum's Phillips Library, Salem.

MSSRW refers to the multi-volume compendium, *Mass. Soldiers & Sailors in the Revolutionary War*, available at the Salem Public Library among other places.

MSSCRW refers to the multi-volume compendium, *Mass. Soldiers, Sailors, & Marines in the Civil War*, available at the Salem Public Library among other places.

EIHC refers to the Essex Institute Historical Collections (discontinued), a multi-volume set (first volume published in 1859) of data and articles about Essex County. The indices of the EIHC have been consulted regarding many of the people associated with this house.

The six-volume published Salem Vital records (marriages, births, and deaths through 1849) have been consulted, as have the Salem Directory and later Naumkeag Directory, which have information about residents and their addresses, etc.

Sidney Perley's three-volume *History of Salem, 1626-1716* has been consulted, as has the four-volume *William Bentley's Diary*, J. Duncan Phillips' books, some newspaper obituaries, and other sources.

Salem real estate valuations, and, where applicable, Salem Street Books, have also been consulted, as have genealogies.

There is much more material available about Salem and its history; and the reader is encouraged to make his or her own discoveries.

--Robert Booth

G. W. Bruce
 to ^{buy}
 L. Harrington
 One 50 R. Stamp
 Entry of Goods
 Canceled.

Know all men by these Presents, That we Eliza A. Bruce, in her own
 rights, wife of George W. Bruce, and George W. Bruce, both of Salem in
 the County of Essex and State of Massachusetts In Consideration of
 one dollar paid by Leonard Harrington of said Salem the receipt
 whereof is hereby acknowledged, do hereby give, grant, bargain, sell
 and convey unto the said Leonard Harrington his heirs and
 assigns a certain parcel of land situate in said Salem and bound-
 ed and described as follows, to wit: Beginning at the northwest-
 erly corner thereof by land of said Bruce thence running Southwesterly
 by land of said Bruce three feet and nine inches to land of said
 Harrington, thence running easterly by land of said Harrington
 nineteen feet and six inches to a point nineteen feet and six inches
 from the present westerly line of Flint street, thence running north-
 westerly by land of said Bruce nineteen feet and six inches to the point
 begun at, all of said measurements being more or less, or however
 otherwise bounded. To have and to hold the above granted prem-
 ises, with all the privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging to
 the said Leonard Harrington his heirs and assigns, to their use and
 behoof forever. And we the said Eliza A. and George W. for ourselves and
 our heirs, executors and administrators, do covenant with the said
 Harrington his heirs and assigns, that we are lawfully seized in fee
 simple of the aforegranted premises; that they are free from all incum-
 brances, except a mortgage to said Saml. P. Andrews as recorded with Es-
 sex Deeds Southern District Book 118 Leaf 71. that we have good right to
 sell and convey the same to the said Harrington his heirs and assigns
 forever as aforesaid; and that we will and our heirs, executors and
 administrators shall warrant and defend the same to the said
 Harrington his heirs and assigns forever, against the lawful claims

and demands of all persons. I an witness whereof, as the said
Elija A. Bruce and George W. Bruce have hereunto set our hands and
seals this day of _____ in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and seventy
one. Dower and Homestead clauses erased before signing, also the
words "four" and "six" erased and the words "three" and "nine" interlined
before signing.

Elija A. Bruce seal

Signed, sealed and delivered,

Geo. W. Bruce seal

in presence of Rebecca B. Andrews

Essex co. April 3, 1871. These persons

to E. A. B. Saml. P. Andrews to G. W. B. all appeared the above named

Elija A. Bruce & George W. Bruce and acknowledged the above instru-
ment to be their free act and deed;

Before me, Saml. P. Andrews Justice of the Peace,

Essex co. Recd. April 4, 1871. 5 m. before S. P. Andrews J. P. by Ephim Brown Ref.

G. W. Bruce
to
L. Harrington

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rights, wife of George W. Bruce, and George W. Bruce both of Salem in

One 50¢ R. Stamp
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